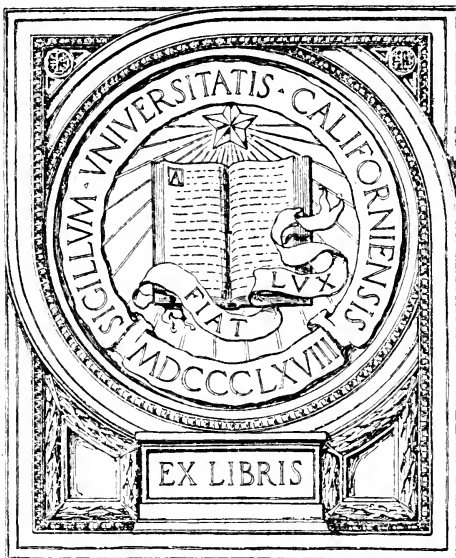


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Reply

TO

REMARKS OF REV. MOSES STUART,

Late of Andover Theological Seminary,

ON

HON. JOHN JAY,

AND AN

EXAMINATION OF HIS SCRIPTURAL EXEGESIS,

CONTAINED IN HIS RECENT PAMPHLET

ENTITLED,

“Conscience and the Constitution:”

BY

WILLIAM JAY.

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New-York :

PRINTED BY J. A. GRAY, 79 FULTON, COR. OF GOLD ST.

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1850.



# REPLY

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## Reply.



REV. SIR:

In your late work, "CONSCIENCE AND THE CONSTITUTION," you have by a coarse and clumsy device attempted to rebuke me in the name of my honored parent. The character of your assault upon me is intended to convey the impression, without the responsibility of a direct assertion, that were John Jay now alive he would concur with you in sustaining the course of Mr. Webster, and in condemning the doctrine of the sinfulness of human bondage. I owe it to his memory, to save it from such a stigma.

You refrain from quoting the "declarations," by which, as you assert, I "degrade and vilify" my own parent, and "hold him up to contempt." The justice which you deny me, I accord to you, and give the language on which I intend to comment:—

"I could not help thinking more particularly on one great and good man, who took an active part in all the formative process of our General Government, and by his skill and wisdom saved our new settlements from the horrors of Indian aggression. Every one will, of course, know that I speak of the illustrious JOHN JAY. What if his portrait had been hanging in the hall where the Anti-slavery Society recently met under the presiding auspices of his descendant? Would it not have brought to every mind the recollection of what the Earl of Chatham said, when addressing a descendant

(then in the House of Commons) of a noble ancestor, whose picture was in full view? His words were, 'From the tapestry that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor looks down and frowns upon his degenerate offspring.' I must except, in my application of this declaration, the last two words. They should not be applied to such a man as the Hon. William Jay. But I may say: Would not his immortal ancestor have looked down with a mixture of sorrow and of frowning, on a descendant who could exhort his countrymen to disregard and trample under foot the Constitution which his father had so signally helped to establish; and who could pour out an unrestrained torrent of vituperation upon Mr. Webster, who has taken up the Constitution where Mr. Jay's ancestor had left it, and stood ever since in the place of the latter as its defender and expounder? How would that agitated and frowning face moreover have gathered blackness, when the presiding officer of that meeting went on to say, that Mr. Webster had not made his speech from any conviction of sentiment, but because the cotton merchants and manufacturers of Boston demanded such views to be maintained, and these gentry had of course given it their approbation? This—all this—of such a man as Mr. Webster. And all this, too, of the Boston gentlemen who commended Mr. Webster's speech! To one who knows them as well as I do, this is absolutely shocking. At all events, it is ungentlemanly; it is passionate; and what is more than all—it is *absolutely false*. To see the Hon. W. Jay presiding over such a meeting, and opening it with declarations which degrade and vilify his illustrious ancestor, and hold him up to contempt, forces from one the spontaneous exclamation: *O quantum mutatus ab illo!*" P. 62.

There is, sir, throughout your book, a freedom both of language and of censure, and a recklessness of consequences both to yourself and others, that bespeak at least great frankness. It is therefore singular, that in the above passage you should shrink from applying to me the epithet of "degenerate offspring,"—an epithet I most richly merit, if what you say of me be true. Your disclaimer is not in keeping

either with your language, or with your usual apparent sincerity.

You think the portrait of John Jay, at the late meeting, would have reminded all of the words you quote from Chat-ham. The reason why I presided over the Anti-slavery Society is, that now I am old, I do not depart from the way in which I was early trained by parental precept and example. The first Anti-slavery Society ever formed in New-York, assembled in 1785, under "the presiding auspices" of JOHN JAY. The first clause of the preamble to its constitution contained the following affirmation:—

"The benevolent Creator and Father of men having given to them all an equal right to life, liberty and property, no sovereign power on earth can justly deprive them of either, but in conformity to impartial government and laws to which they have expressly or tacitly consented."

Here, you perceive, sir, there is a recognition of a Power above every constitution and government on earth. And what inference was drawn from the asserted gift of the "benevolent Creator and Father of men"?—"It is THEREFORE our DUTY, both as free citizens and Christians, not only to regard with compassion the injustice done to those among us who are held as slaves, but to endeavor by lawful ways and means to enable them *to share equally with us* in that civil and religious liberty with which an indulgent Providence has blessed these States, and to which our brethren are AS MUCH ENTITLED AS OURSELVES." You now discover, sir, that your denunciations against Abolitionists for their disregard for the laws of Moses, the precepts of Christ, and the teachings of the apostles, reach even the ancestor of him you have so ruthlessly assailed.

On the 12th Nov., 1785, the Society ordered a reprint of 2,000 copies of a certain pamphlet first published in 1776, and which in modern parlance would be described as "incendiary, inflammatory, and insurrectionary in the highest degree." With the temerity and insolence still lingering among Abolitionists, it was dedicated "TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS." I know not whether

the following extracts will most excite your astonishment or indignation:—

“We naturally look to you in behalf of more than half a million of persons in these colonies, who are under such a degree of oppression and tyranny as to be wholly deprived of all civil and personal liberty, to which they have *as good a right as any of their fellow-men*, and are reduced to the most abject state of bondage and slavery, without any just cause.... It is observable that when the Swiss were engaged in their struggle for liberty, in which they so remarkably succeeded, they entered into the following public resolve: ‘No Swiss shall take away anything by violence from another, neither in time of war, nor peace.’ How reasonable and important is it, that we should at this time heartily enter into and thoroughly execute such a resolution? And that this implies the emancipation of *ALL* our African slaves, surely no one can doubt.... May you judge the poor of the people, save the children of the needy, relieve the oppressed, and deliver the spoiled out of the hands of the oppressor, and be the happy instruments of procuring and establishing universal LIBERTY to white and black, to be transmitted down to the latest posterity.”

On reading the tract thus dedicated, one is almost tempted to pronounce it a forgery by some of the fanatical Abolitionists of the present day, so remarkably does it correspond in sentiment and expression with their own writings. The following is like some of that plain talk which so grievously offends you:—“Why should the ministers of the gospel hold their peace, and not testify against this great and public INIQUITY? How can they refuse to plead the cause of those oppressed poor against their cruel oppressor? They are commanded to lift up their voice and cry aloud, and show the people their SINS. Have we not reason to fear many of them have offended Heaven by their silence, through *fear of the masters* who stand ready to make war against any one who attempts to deprive them of their slaves; or because they themselves have slaves which they are *not willing to give up*? A number of churches in New-England have purged themselves of this

iniquity, and determined not to tolerate slavery. If all the churches in these United States would come to the same measure, and imitate the Friends, called Quakers, would they not act more like Christian churches than they now do?"

Abolitionists, we are told, are vituperative; but this is no new thing; their fathers were so before them. "Though your horse, which had been stolen from you, has passed through many hands, and been sold ten times, you think you have a right to demand and take him, in whosoever hands you find him, without refunding a farthing of what he cost him; and yet, though your negroes prove their right to themselves, and constantly make a demand upon you to deliver them up, you refuse till they pay the full price you gave for them, because the civil law will not oblige you to do it.—'Thou Hypocrite.' Luke xiii. 15."

You affirm that "if Abolitionists are to be heard, God has sanctioned not only a positive evil, but one of the greatest of all crimes." P. 43. What think you then, sir, of the blasphemy of John Jay and his associates, who dared to disseminate such doctrine as the following?—"If it be not a sin, an open, flagrant violation of all the rules of justice and humanity, to hold these slaves in bondage, it is folly to put ourselves to any trouble and expense to free them; but if the contrary be true—if it be A SIN OF CRIMSON DYE, this reformation cannot be urged with too much zeal, nor attempted too soon, whatever difficulties are in the way."

Abuse of "our Southern brethren" is one of the many crimes charged by you upon Abolitionists; but you should recollect that the vice is hereditary. Here is some very old-fashioned abuse—contesting the plea that slave labor is indispensable in hot climates, the New-York Society say:—"There is not the least evidence of this, but much to the contrary. The truth is, most of the whites which are born in the *Southern* States, or the West Indies, are not educated to labor, but great part of them in *idleness and intemperance*. The blacks are introduced to do the work, and it is thought a disgrace for a white person to get his living by labor. By this means *the whites in general are vicious, and*

*all imbibe a haughty, tyrannical spirit* by holding so many slaves, and many of them, *rather a plague* than a blessing to all about them."

Not only did the Society publish this powerful Anti-slavery tract of 60 pages, but they also reprinted "AN ADDRESS TO THE OWNERS OF SLAVES IN THE AMERICAN COLONIES." I have room for only one extract from this Address :—" You who are professors of religion, and yet the owners of slaves, are entreated well to consider how you must appear in the sight of God, and of all who view your conduct in a true light, while you attend your family and public devotions, and sit down from time to time at the table of the Lord. If your neighbor wrong you of a few shillings, you think him utterly unfit to attend that sacred ordinance with you : but what is this to the wrong you are doing to *your brethren* whom you are holding in slavery ! Should a man at Algiers have a number of your children his slaves, and should he by some means be converted, and become a professor of Christianity, would you not expect he would soon set your children at liberty ? "

† These two tracts were, by the order of the Society, sent to *each member of Congress*, together with the Constitution, and the names of the officers. You will be amazed, sir, at the audacious impudence of such a measure, and especially when you recollect that JOHN JAY, under whose "presiding auspices" all this was done, was at the very moment holding, at the pleasure of Congress, the most important and I believe the most lucrative office in the Government. Yet strange as it may appear to you, and the present race of Northern politicians, he was neither removed from office, nor rebuked for his fanaticism and irreligion.

Mr. Jay was not a nominal President. In his official capacity he corresponded with an Anti-slavery Society in France, and with another in England, and in his letter to the latter remarked, " We will cheerfully co-operate with you in endeavoring to procure advocates for the same cause in other countries." In this same letter he declared that it was undoubtedly very inconsistent with the declarations of the United

States, "on the subject of human rights, to permit *a single slave* to be found within their jurisdiction," and added, "We confess the justice of your strictures on that head." And all this to Englishmen! Certainly John Jay's patriotism was much on a par with that of modern Abolitionists. He continued to occupy the chair of the Society till 1792, when he resigned it, on taking his seat on the bench, as Chief Justice of the United States. The elevation of an avowed Abolitionist, and the President of an Anti-slavery Society, to such a station must excite your astonishment. To use your words in respect to his son, it was "absolutely shocking." The reason was, sir, that the servility of Northern politicians had not then, as at present, conferred on the slaveholders the power of excluding from office under the Federal Government every known advocate of the rights of man. |

During the Revolutionary War he wrote: "Till America comes into this measure," (gradual abolition,) "her prayers to Heaven for liberty will be IMPIOUS;" and at the same period, having occasion to draft a deed of manumission, he prefaced it with—"Whereas the children of men are by nature equally free, and cannot without injustice be either reduced to, or **HELD** in slavery."

On the whole, sir, I flatter myself that there are some minds to which my father's portrait at the late meeting would not have suggested the words, "degenerate offspring," when they beheld me following his example in presiding over an Anti-slavery Society, and using strong language in reference to human bondage.

You are pleased to ask in reference to myself, "Would not his immortal ancestor have looked down with a mixture of sorrow and of frowning on a descendant who could exhort his countrymen to disregard and trample under foot the Constitution which his father had so signally helped to establish?" Your whole book bears ample testimony to the heedlessness with which it was written. The extreme irritation caused by the obloquy you had incurred by unadvisedly endorsing the dubious morality of Mr. Webster's course, did not permit you to weigh the terms you employed, nor to consider the justice

of the denunciations you fulminated. The charge you prefer against me is founded on my printed Address; yet it did not occur to you that it would be but fair to quote the exhortation to which you refer. Had you looked for it for the purpose of transferring it to your pages, you would not have found it. I gave my reasons for believing the Mason and Webster bill of abominations a gross violation of the Constitution, and I did exhort such of my hearers as regarded slavery a sin not to incur the guilt of that sin, by aiding in reducing a fugitive once more to bondage; and I contended that, in all cases, it was our duty to obey what we believed to be the commands of God, in preference to the opposite commands of men. At the same time I reminded my hearers that, when we could not conscientiously obey the laws of the land, we were bound to endure the penalties of our disobedience, without making any forcible resistance to their infliction. It is strange that a Christian divine, who had spent forty years in the study of the Bible, should controvert these great principles, or insult me for uttering them. Had my father, sir, listened to my address, he would have rejoiced in the evidence it afforded that his efforts to bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord had not been wholly unavailing. As President of the New-York Society, he drafted a petition to the Legislature, praying for a law prohibiting the selling of slaves out of the State. The petition thus commenced: "Your memorialists being deeply affected by the situation of those who, though **FREE BY THE LAWS OF GOD**, are held in slavery by the laws of this State." His name was placed at the head of this petition, and was followed by one hundred and twenty-two more. Here was a declaration of one of the most offensive principles of the modern Abolitionists,—a principle which you, if I understand your book, deem impious. It is because I regard a fugitive free by the laws of God, that I cannot aid in reducing him to slavery; and because I refuse to join you and Mr. Webster in catching runaways, you pour upon me the vials of your indignant wrath.

I feel little disposed, sir, to examine your arguments in behalf of slavery, since it is the strange peculiarity of your very

queer book, that on building up and completing an argument you immediately knock it down. Abolitionists contend that American slavery is sinful. You are shocked at the reproach they thus cast upon the volume of inspiration and its Divine Author. To that blessed volume you call their attention, and introduce them to slaveholding patriarchs. You prove by arithmetical calculation that the Father of the Faithful owned a gang of one thousand five hundred and ninety slaves. Well, did that justify American slavery? You answer, "What Christ has commanded us is *our* rule, and not what the patriarchs *did*, who lived when the light was just beginning to dawn." P. 26. So much for Abraham and his gang! Turning your back upon the patriarchs, you advance to Moses. You examine his laws, and triumphantly point to a statute which, as you suppose, authorizes the purchase of slaves from the neighboring nations. Well, does the former bondage of Syrian heathen justify the present bondage of African heathen and their descendants? Again you answer: "None can reason from the case of the Jews—the one favored, pre-eminent, secluded nation—to the case of men who lived after the coming of HIM who broke down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, proclaimed one common God and Father of all, one common Redeemer and Sanctifier; that this God is no respecter of persons, and that he has made of *one blood* all the nations that dwell upon the face of the earth. I say, none can *now* crave liberty to purchase slaves of the Gentiles or Jews on the ground of Mosaic permission." P. 36. So much for Moses and his heathen slaves!

From the Old Testament you turn to the New, with an air of most perfect confidence, to demonstrate the lawfulness of slavery. Christ, you tell us, took no special cognizance of slavery, and if it were *malum in se* he cannot be free from "the imputation of gross neglect and abandonment of duty as a preacher of righteousness," p. 45. Paul and Peter expressly sanctioned slavery in their epistles, and the former sent back a runaway slave. "Paul's Christian conscience would not permit him to injure the vested rights of Philemon." Again, "The conscience of Paul sends back the fugitive without any

obligation at all on the ground of compact." P. 61. You mean Paul's ancestors had not formed a Constitution by which they mutually agreed to surrender fugitives. Well, does the course pursued by Christ and his apostles prove the righteousness of American slavery? For the third time you give a most rational and satisfactory answer: "It" (American slavery) "is a glaring contradiction of the first and fundamental principle, not only of the Bible, which declares that all are of one blood, but of our Declaration of Independence, which avers that all men are born (created) with an inherent and inalienable right to life, liberty, and property. As existing among us slavery has taken its worst form: it degrades men made in the image of their God and Redeemer into brute beasts, or (which makes them still lower) converts them into mere *goods and chattels*. In this form of slavery all the sacred, social relations of life are destroyed. Husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, are not known in law, nor protected nor recognized by it. In conformity with this, these relations are every day severed by some slave-dealers, without regard to the feelings of the wretched beings who are torn asunder, and all their parental, conjugal, and filial sympathies are the subject of scorn, if not derision. No invasion of human rights can be worse than this,—none more directly opposed to the will of God inscribed upon the pages of the Scriptures, and on the very nature of mankind." P. 103. And thus you go on for about five pages, describing the horrors and abominations of slavery, and the licentiousness and wickedness in which it involves the whites. In short, the slave region is pretty much of a Pandemonium. There is one regulation which particularly excites your indignation, but which is however in perfect keeping with the place and the system: "In some of the States" (you might have said in almost every one) "the learning even to *read* is forbidden, thus contravening with a high hand the command of Heaven to search the Scriptures. In such case obedience to a human law is **CRIME**, it is treason against the majesty of Heaven." P. 104. Really, sir, had my father, as you imagined, frowned

upon me for maintaining the duty of disobeying a sinful law, I might have called upon you to plead my apology.

And now, sir, if some poor wretch who had escaped from this bad place, where the body is tortured, the heart crushed, and the soul perishes for lack of knowledge, should be found in Massachusetts, even at Andover, that mount of vision, where Bibles are plenty, where schools are open, and where the servants of the Lord teach the true orthodox faith, would you seize him and thrust him back into the midst of the pollutions, the miseries, and the spiritual darkness you have described? Certainly,—in the fullness of your gratitude you have publicly thanked Mr. Daniel Webster for recalling you to your constitutional duty. It would seem that it was by him, and not by Saint Paul, that you have been awakened to the duty of catching fugitives; and now your conscience would not permit you to injure “the vested rights” of BRUIN, or any other trafficker in human flesh. “The Constitution in respect to fugitives held to service or labor **MUST BE OBEYED**. It is useless to talk about *conscience* as setting it aside.” P. 71. So the Constitution and Paul’s respect for Philemon’s vested rights leave you no discretion; even Conscience may not interpose her veto. But—“I would not have upon my conscience the guilt of turning God’s image, redeemed by the blood of his Son, and made free by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, into *goods and chattels*. I would not bring on my soul that guilt for ten thousand worlds.” P. 117. Certainly, sir, there are, as you say, various kinds of consciences, and some of them have the oscillations of a pendulum.

You have rendered any reply to your Scriptural *arguments* in behalf of slavery unnecessary; but I am skeptical as to your asserted *fact* that St. Paul was a slave-catcher. You assume without evidence that the servant of Philemon was a *slave*. Without admitting this assumption, it is too favorable to my *present* purpose to be *now* questioned by me. According to our Biblical chronology, the Epistle to Philemon was written A. D. 64, the year after Paul arrived in Rome, where he lived two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him. Among those attracted to his dwell-

ing by his preaching and conversation was a poor stranger. By some means the apostle discovered that his humble but attentive visitor was a runaway slave belonging to his friend Philemon at Colosse. What course under such circumstances would your conscience have prompted you to take, had you been in the apostle's place? It would have warned you not to "injure the vested rights" of your friend. Under this admonition you would have instantly sent for one of the *Fugitivarii*, a body of men at Rome whose profession it was to catch fugitive slaves,—a profession which, under the countenance of some eminent men in State and Church, may soon be introduced into Massachusetts, as it already is in the Southern States. The Fugitivarius, on being informed when the slave would probably next visit you, would be on the watch; and, having seized him, would handcuff him and hurry him off to Colosse, and there receive the usual reward from the master. Not so St. Paul. He took the slave into his house, as seems intimated by the context, he *harbored* him, and refrained from giving Philemon any intelligence respecting him. He continued his instructions to this poor, ignorant slave, and was rewarded by his conversion. Having thus begotten him in his bonds, he loved him, and called him his son. His affection for the slave and his regard for the master made him desirous of re-uniting them, being persuaded that the happiness of both would thus be advanced. Formerly Philemon had been a loser by Onesimus, but *now* the new convert to Christ was in a capacity to be useful to his late master, as he was already to the apostle. He is, said St. Paul, "now profitable to thee and to me." How *profitable*? Had St. Paul been making money by the labor of his slave-convert? He was profitable precisely in the same sense that St. Paul's friend would have been had he been at Rome. "I would have retained him, that in *thy* stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel." The Christian ministration of prayer and sympathy which Philemon would joyfully have rendered to the apostle, he was now himself about to receive from his former slave. But, if Paul wished to retain his convert with him, why did he not do so?

He tells his friend, "Without thy mind I would do nothing." That is, as you understand him, "Without your leave I would not injure your vested rights in your Christian chattel." Very different are the words of the apostle: "Without thy mind I would do nothing, that *thy* benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly." The benefit here spoken of was obviously one to be *conferred by Philemon*, not received by him; and the apostle, by restoring Onesimus, gives his friend the opportunity of conferring this benefit as a free-will offering, instead of permitting it to be apparently extorted from him. No thanks to him that his slave was free at Rome; let Onesimus return to Colosse, and then it will be seen that this benefit was not of necessity, but willingly. The letter continues: "Perhaps he *therefore* departed for a season that thou shouldest receive him for ever." St. Paul does not of course here refer to the *motive* of the slave in absconding, but to the reason why, in the course of Providence, he was permitted to abscond. "Possibly it was so ordered, that your servant should leave you for a season, that he might be re-united to you in the bonds of the gospel, in the life that is, and in that which is to come." You understand the apostle as here intimating that perhaps the slave was permitted to run away, in order that he might be taught at Rome not to run away a second time! "This last phrase (*for ever*) has reference to the *fact* that Paul supposed that the sense of Christian obligation which was now entertained by Onesimus would prevent him from ever *repeating* his offense." P. 60. Most worthy object of providential interference! Most extraordinary *exegesis* from a Doctor in Israel, and a teacher of a School of the Prophets!

You truly remark, that "Philemon, being an active Christian, would in a moment have submitted to any command of Paul respecting Onesimus." And what was the command? "Receive him, that is my own bowels, *not now as a slave*, but above a slave, a BROTHER BELOVED. If thou count me therefore as a partner, (of the grace of the gospel,) receive him AS MYSELF." And how, sir, was this slave "sent back"? Not in fetters, not in charge of officers, not bewailing his bitter fate, not cursing a religion which reduced him to the level of

a brute. No, sir ; he went voluntarily, joyfully, carrying with him apostolic orders for his immediate emancipation, and blessing God for his temporal as well as spiritual liberty in Christ Jesus. The letter to Philemon was not the only one intrusted to him. The apostle conferred on him the honor of making him the bearer of the epistle to the church at Colosse. In this epistle the late slave is introduced to the church as "a faithful and beloved brother," and the church is referred to him for particular intelligence respecting the cause of Christ in Rome. It is a tradition of the early church, that Onesimus became Bishop of Ephesus.

Very little, sir, do you know of Abolitionists when you deem it consistent with truth and decency to affirm, "If the great apostle himself were to re-appear on earth, and come now in the midst of us, (Boston,) and preach the doctrine contained in his Epistles, he would unquestionably incur the danger of being mobbed." P. 54. I think it far more likely he would suffer the pains and penalties of the Webster and Mason bill for *harboring fugitive slaves*. When you shall give satisfactory assurances that you will "send back" fugitives in the same manner and on the same terms that St. Paul did ; when you shall induce them voluntarily to return to their masters, and their masters to receive them *not as slaves*, but as beloved brothers, and to treat them with the kindness due, I will not say to "Paul the aged," but even to an Andover Professor, I pledge myself that the Abolitionists throughout the whole country, not excepting your neighbors in Boston, will consign to your care every fugitive that may apply to them for succor.

But the Constitution declares that fugitives shall be delivered up, and you sneeringly exclaim, "Conscience violating a solemn compact!" Neither Abolitionists nor their fathers ever made a compact that private individuals should hunt slaves ; nor would such a compact have been binding on any who regarded its requisitions as sinful. You intimate that obstacles cannot *lawfully* be thrown in the way of the claimant of a fugitive. This is a modern opinion. On the 2d June, 1795, the New-York Society appointed a Committee to wait upon all the printers in the city, to urge them to refuse to print ad-

vertisements for the recovery of runaway slaves. This was when New-York was a slave State, and the slave-catching law of 1793 in full force. But you have another and very curious argument in behalf of slave-catching. You ask, "Can we respect a conscience which puts the broad seal of disgrace and infamy on those immortal men and patriots who formed our Constitution, and who in all our States accepted and approved of it? And where now has conscience been these sixty years past? I am astounded at the rapid railroad progress of new discovery." P. 62. Or rather, sir, you are astounded that others should even approximate to the rapid railroad progress of your own discovery. Suffer me, sir, to ask a question at least as pertinent as your own: Can we respect a conscience which puts the broad seal of disgrace not only upon the patriots of the Revolution, but on the fathers and martyrs of the Church, by declaring that were they now alive and addicted to their former habits, they would one and all be unfit for Christian communion? Where now has "conscience been for centuries?" You will surely recollect your laborious argument in support of your proposition—"IT IS A MATTER OF EXPEDIENCY AND DUTY FOR OUR CHURCHES NOT TO ADMIT MEMBERS IN FUTURE, EXCEPT ON THE GROUND OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM THE USE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS, AND FROM ALL TRAFFIC IN THEM."—*Stuart's Prize Essay*, p. 63. You expressly include by name among intoxicating liquors, "Port, Madeira, Sherry, Teneriffe, Lisbon," and other wines. So it seems he who habitually drinks a glass of wine after dinner is unworthy to show forth the Lord's death; while he who habitually buys and sells husbands, wives, and children, and uses their labor without wages, is freely admitted to the holy table, and often into the pulpit!

You are sure, sir, my father's "agitated and frowning countenance would have gathered blackness" at hearing the remarks which fell from his son in regard to Mr. Webster and the Boston gentlemen who commended his speech. Of another gentleman of irreproachable Christian character, however much he may differ from you in his estimate of Mr. Webster, you scruple not to assert that he "exhibits marked signs of preferring to reign in a certain bad place, rather than serve

in a good one." P. 64. It is with ill grace, sir, that a clergyman who has preached the gospel "more than forty-five years," and who nevertheless indulges himself in the use of such language, lectures a *layman* for freely expressing his opinion of the public conduct of a public man; even "of such a man as Mr. Webster." I would do dishonor to my father's memory could I for a moment admit the possibility, that he would have approved the tortuous course of that gentleman, a course so totally different from that which he himself pursued through life.

Had Mr. Webster justified his sudden and extraordinary violation of his repeated and energetic pledges in behalf of the Wilmot Proviso by a change of his opinion respecting the constitutionality of the measure, he might have been commended for his manly frankness. But he admits no such change of opinion. He rests his justification on the discovery of a law of the earth's formation, which renders the existence of slavery on *one foot* of a territory twice as large as all France a *physical impossibility*. The people living in the territory are utterly unconscious of any such physical impossibility;\* the slaveholders of the South deny the existence of any such law of nature,† nor has it ever been known or dreamed of in any portion of the four quarters of the globe. When Mr. Webster offers a pretended "law of physical geography" and the "Asiatic scenery"‡ of New-Mexico and California as an apology for his perfidy to the cause of freedom, he offers, in my opinion, an insult not merely to the moral sense, but also to the common sense of mankind.

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\*The people of New-Mexico petitioned Congress to be preserved from the establishment of slavery, and the people of California in their Constitution have prohibited its introduction.

† A Convention consisting of delegates from the Slave States, recently assembled at Nashville. It resolved, "That California is peculiarly adapted for slave labor, and that if the tenure of slave property was by recognition of this kind secured in that part of the country south of 36° 30' it would in a short time form into one or more slaveholding States, to swell the number and power of those already in existence." Mr. Webster extends the physical impossibility of slavery to California by name, as well as to New-Mexico.

‡ In 1840 it was computed there were 500,000 slaves in British India. A traffic was carried on in slaves by importing them by sea from the eastern coast of Africa into the East Indies, and Arab dealers carried African slaves into Persia.—*Adams's Letters to T. F. Buxton on Slavery in British India*, p. 78. So it is possible for even negro slaves to breathe amid "Asiatic scenery."

You assail me for reflecting on the "Boston gentlemen who commended Mr. Webster's speech." If you refer to the gentlemen who joined you in signing the thanksgiving letter, you are mistaken. I did not make one single allusion to them. I was speaking of the slave-catching bill for which Mr. Webster was to vote. My words were: "It is now a matter of cool New-England calculation. The cotton interest of Massachusetts calls for it, and the gentry of Boston are cheering on their Senator in his strange and reckless course." I referred to the cheers with which, as the papers informed us, his street harangue on slave-catching was received by his audience. No man born out of New-England has probably a higher respect than myself for the intelligence and virtue of her inhabitants. But human nature is, I suppose, the same in Massachusetts as elsewhere; and you have yet much to learn of the character of your species, if you deny that pecuniary interests, real or imagined, have a powerful influence on the political views of large bodies of men.

You greatly mistake me, sir, if you suppose I have troubled you with this letter from any idea of *self-defense*. The passionate and indefinite virulence of your assault renders it wholly innocuous to myself; but you have attempted (I admit in a very awkward manner) to identify my father's principles and conduct with the pro-slavery course of yourself and Mr. Webster. You think the sanction of his name would be convenient to both. In yielding to the promptings of filial duty, and rescuing my father's memory from the disgrace you would attach to it, I may possibly have given some aid to a cause dear to my parent's heart, by exhibiting his own sentiments and conduct on the subject of slavery. You have moreover afforded me a convenient opportunity of exhibiting, by your own laborious efforts, the utter worthlessness of all Scriptural arguments in justification of American slavery, and the foul dishonor they cast upon the gospel of our ever blessed and adorable Redeemer. I cheerfully do you the justice to admit that your moral sense revolts against your Bible theory. But I beg you to reflect whether you are engaged in a wise and safe employment, and one becoming your position, when you labor to prove that the fountain whence we draw our knowl-

edge of God's holy will, is sending forth most bitter waters, and that the tree of life is bearing the apples of Sodom?

The very uncereemonious manner with which you have been pleased to treat me, will I trust excuse a little freedom on my part. Permit me to use the frankness you have invited, in submitting a few plain truths for the consideration of yourself, and your Reverend associates in Andover and elsewhere, whose theology embraces the political morality illustrated by Mr. Webster, and that system of evangelical benevolence which is exemplified in American slavery and the delivery of fugitives. Laymen, from their more promiscuous intercourse with the world, have usually better opportunities than the clergy of marking the practical working of agencies and influences unfavorable to Christianity. You are probably aware that even religious men are too much inclined to expect a higher standard of moral excellence in the clergy than they are willing to prescribe for themselves. The maxim that the world will love its own, is reversed in regard to such of the ministers of Christ as are supposed to belong to it. Hence in public estimation, the sacred character of a preacher of righteousness greatly aggravates every deviation from Christian morality, whether of conduct or opinion, which may be imputed to him. No intelligent man, unbiased by interest or education, can pause in pronouncing such a system as American slavery to be unjust and cruel. To deny this, is to deny that God has given to man the knowledge of good and evil, even in the lowest degree. But while multitudes are uncontrolled in their own conduct by their conviction of the wickedness of slavery, that conviction necessarily influences their opinion of him who, professing to be the messenger of Heaven, proclaims that this mighty wrong is sanctioned and allowed by a just and holy God. Such an announcement generally leads to one of two inferences: either that the preacher falsifies his message, or that a religion which outrages the moral sense of mankind cannot be of divine origin. The first is the inference most usually drawn, and disgust with the preacher is the natural result. But unhappily, instances are not wanting in which the arguments fabricated from the Bible effect a lodgment in the mind, and excite, not as was intended hatred of abolition,

but hatred of Christianity. Facts have come to my knowledge far too numerous to permit me to doubt for a moment, that the course pursued by many of our clergy in relation to caste and slavery, has shaken the faith of many weak Christians, and given a vast impulse to infidelity. There is, sir, great reason to fear that at the final account, the blood of souls will be found in the skirts of some who have proclaimed themselves commissioned to sanctify the whip and the fetters of the slave, by first hanging them on the cross of the Redeemer.

Once more, sir,—there is not a miscreant in the street who insults and maltreats the negro, that does not know, if he knows anything of Christianity, that it is a religion intended for ALL, and that its Divine Author appeared in humble guise and associated freely with the poor, the lowly and the despised. Yet in the example and conduct of many a master in Israel may a sanction be found for the contumely, injustice and cruelty which fall to the lot of an unhappy and persecuted people. In vain has the voice of inspiration declared that in the Church of Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. In vain have we been reminded from on high, “Ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus.” Certain Reverend disciples of the lowly Redeemer scorn to be *one* with negroes, even in Christ Jesus, and hence with impious hands they build up the heathen barrier of CASTE, and insult in the very house of God all to whom the Almighty Father has seen fit in his sovereign pleasure to give a dark complexion. Not a few of these men are putting forth high pretensions to ministerial power and dignity. Episcopalians have recently been told by one of their Bishops, that the clergy are “*the representatives of Christ, who alone have the charge of the discipline of his Church, with power to remit and retain sins.*” Yet within a few weeks the majority of the clergy of a neighboring diocese, assembled in Convention, deliberately refused a seat in the council of the Church to a brother representative of Christ, and equally with themselves a remitter and retainer of sins, solely because African blood flowed in his veins.

We are favored with sermons and addresses in abundance

on the importance of a learned ministry, and we are urged to give our money for the support of Theological Seminaries. Yet one of these Seminaries has practically declared that any preaching is good enough for negroes, by shutting its doors against the admission of colored candidates for holy orders.

The experience of the present, as well as of past times, instructs us that Christianity is so identified in the minds of many with the character of its teachers, that the delinquencies of the one unhappily afford to multitudes an apology for questioning the authenticity of the other. If a woe be pronounced against him who offends even a little one who believes in Christ, surely the minister of the cross cannot be guiltless, when, yielding to political attachments, to the dictates of worldly policy, or the influence of unholy prejudice, he undermines the faith of many, and gives great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM JAY.

*Bedford, 25th June, 1850.*







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